

# Keeping You Posted



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## FAITH/SEXUALITY STUDY FINDINGS:

### Church Discussion Wanted

Whether and when to have a sexual relationship is or has been an important question for 80% of the UCC members who answered a recent survey—and it's a question they want the church to address.

Staff members and consultants with UC Board for Homeland Ministries developed the "faith and sexuality survey" to find out what sort of help UCC members need in dealing with faith and sexuality concerns and how the church could respond.

Through area coordinators, the survey went out to some 14,000 UCC people in 75 churches. About 2,800 responded, for a return rate of about 20%. UCBHM will use the results to develop programs and resources on faith and sexuality, says Theodore Erickson, general secretary of the American Missionary Association division.

Beside whether and when to have sex, seven other topics were prominent in the respondents' minds, with 60% reporting con-

cerns or questions about them: loneliness and the desire for physical closeness, physical maturation, children's questions about sex, negative feelings about the body, contraception, marital expectations, and conflicts about sex roles becoming more equal. More than half reported conflicts or concerns about masturbation, premarital sex, sexual relations after childbirth, children's sexual behavior and sex-discrimination.

In a section for narratives about their experiences, respondents often mentioned the following: questions about premarital sex; homosexuality, in their own identity or in friends or family members; extramarital affairs (their own or their spouses'); marital problems related to sexual dysfunction, desire or fulfillment; "problem" pregnancies; and sexual abuse, such as molestation, "date rape," marital rape or incest.

Respondents overwhelmingly felt the church should deal with sex-related issues.



Hans Holznagel

(L-R) Mary Byrd and Carmen Longworth in front of their church, Chicago's Good News Community Church, visited by corporate members of UC Board for Homeland Ministries at their annual meeting last month. See meeting story on page 3.

## Worship Book Out in January

The UCC's new inclusive-language *Book of Worship*—the first such book for churchwide use since UC Board for Homeland Ministries released *Services of the Church* in 1969—will be ready for distribution in Jan. (not Dec., as previously announced, because of problems in the printing stage).

"We worked hard at finding language that will feel inclusive to the people using the book," says Dorothy Robinson of the Office for Church Life and Leadership team that produced the book. She says the book not only tries to avoid sexism but also to be sensitive to such issues as disabilities (instructing the leader to "move," not "walk") and racism (being careful with "light and darkness" language).

Two editions will be available: a large-type, "study/chancel" edition in a loose-leaf notebook and a gold-embossed pocket edition with ribbon markers, each \$28. An audio cassette introduction costs \$5.95. Order them from United Church Resources, 1400 N. 7 St., St. Louis, MO 63106, 800-325-7061 or 314-621-1330 in Missouri, Alaska and Puerto Rico.

## CCW SURVEY RESULTS:

### UCC Women Progress, But Not Enough

The number of UCC women in decision-making roles has increased since 1979, when the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society was established. But a CCW survey of 465 female and male UCC leaders indicates the task is not completed.

As part of the General Synod 12 mandate to evaluate UCC progress for women, CCW asked church leaders' opinions about how women and men's experience differs in the home and workplace as well as the church. The findings helped shape CCW's proposal that the UCC create an independent body for women's concerns.

Statistically, while the number of UCC ordained women has increased from 400 in 1979 to 1,460 in 1986, only one-third now serve in churches. A majority of women clergy answering the survey said they were not hired (61%) or paid less (72%) because of their gender. In addition, 39% reported sexual harassment on the job and 66% felt the

church does not appreciate their gifts.

The UCC has more female leaders than in the 1970's, but they are still far short of women's two-thirds presence in the denomination. In the conferences, women have grown from 7% to 30% of professional staff since 1978 and from 34% to 36.5% of boards since 1979. Nationally, women are 43% of professional staff, up from 21% in 1978.

In the secular world, few laywomen felt they were not hired because of their sex, but 55% said they were paid less for that reason. About 15% reported sexual harassment.

Total survey results show that 95% of respondents believe that women are paid less or not hired because of their gender. And 96% said affirmative action is necessary.

In addition, 30% of male clergy reported not being hired due to their age.

The survey was sent to 800 UCC leaders randomly selected from a list of 3,800. Respondents were 72% women and 91% white.

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## THEOLOGY FORUM

### Mary, A True Disciple

By Marion Fitkin

During the season of Advent-Christmas, Christians everywhere ponder the deep and wondrous mystery of Emmanuel, God-with-us. In doing this, we follow a pattern set by his mother, Mary, as she experienced the unfolding of the miraculous sequence of events surrounding the birth of her son, Jesus (Luke 2:19). In other ways, also, we might follow Mary's example, for as we study those few Scripture passages in which she appears, we find that her life is a model of discipleship. We can see why God chose this simple peasant girl to be the mother of His own Son, for she embodied at least three essential characteristics of a disciple.

First, she was open to God. Although Mary was terrified by the appearance of the angel of God, she readily accepted him and his message of God's plan for her. Only a woman of prayer and devotion to God would be able to embrace this awesome responsibility. The song she sang (Luke 1:46-55) reveals that she also was deeply grounded in

Scripture. The persons God speaks to are those who are open to Him and prepared to receive His message, and they become that way by getting to know Him personally through habitual prayer and Scripture study.

Second, Mary trusted God. Therefore, she was willing to undertake a very difficult task for Him; she was willing to accept the stigma of unwed motherhood. Who would ever believe her when she said that God Himself was the father of her child? At first, even Joseph didn't (Matthew 1:18-24).

Her cousin, Elizabeth, recognized Mary's faith in God. When Mary came to visit her, she exclaimed, "Blessed is she (Mary) who has believed what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished" (Luke 1:45). What was happening in Mary's life did not make sense according to human reckoning. Who would have thought that the Messiah would be born into such a poor family, let alone to an unmarried girl? Yet, it is clear that Mary trusted in the Lord rather than in her own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). She did not allow human logic to get in the way of the fulfillment of God's purpose for her.

Third, Mary's life as a disciple demonstrated obedience. Mary's response to the an-

gel Gabriel's astounding message was a tremendous affirmation of her obedience to God's will. She said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). In other words, she said, "Thy will be done!" We can see that Jesus learned obedience to God's will from his mother.

Years later during her son's ministry Mary also demonstrated obedience to him, notably at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:5), and again when she, along with the other disciples, obeyed his command to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, 13, 14).

Lest we think of Mary's character as unattainably virtuous, God allows us glimpses of other traits, such as her exasperation with her young son (Luke 2:48).

These vignettes reveal Mary to be a quite ordinary person. Yet, because of her openness to God, her trust in Him, and her obedience to Him, God was able to use her in a most extraordinary way. Who can tell what extraordinary mission God might have for any one of us who is equally willing to be open to Him, trust Him and be obedient to Him?

*Marion Fitkin is president of the Fellowship of Charismatic Christians in the UCC.*

## Priorities Report

### Youth/Young Adult Ministries

The Calvin Synod has found a way to harness the energy of young adults who wish they could keep going to the Synod's high school summer camp in Mount Pleasant, PA. The Counselor-in-Training Program, scheduled during the same week as the high school camp, gives young adults—mostly ages 19 to 23—a chance to get some training as camp counselors while working as assistants for the high school camp. The participants receive a certificate of their training after two summers in the program. The youth camp is conducted in cooperation with the Hungarian Reformed Church in America.

### Justice and Peace

Vermont's proposed Equal Rights Amendment failed on the Nov. ballot, but the UCC people who campaigned for it did not work in vain, says Christine Boardman, pastor of Killington's Sherburne UCC and chair of the committee for women's concerns of the Vermont Conference. The work of the committee and its ERA taskforce has led to the formation of a conferencewide clergywomen's group. And for some of the UCC people involved in the ERA campaign, "this was the first time they had ever spoken out on this justice issue to their families, their co-workers and the people in their churches," Ms. Boardman says.

### Family Life

The Corvallis (OR) Pastoral Counseling Center—housed in First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and supported in part by First Congregational UCC—helped families anticipate issues of teenage sexuality with an 18-week program for girls 10 to 12 years old and their parents. It included time for the girls to discuss the physical, emotional and sexual changes and feelings of puberty; for parents to preview the content of upcoming sessions, explore their own feelings and plan ways to encourage conversation with their daughters, and for a panel of high school students to answer questions raised by the girls.

### Spiritual Renewal

A day of lectures and discussions on "Spiritual Formation With Children and Youth" drew 170 pastors, Christian educators and parents to First Congregational Church, Middletown, CT, last month. "Our concern was to learn how to encourage children to talk about their spiritual and religious experiences—to name them—and then to celebrate them within the context of the faith community, primarily through worship and with community prayer," says Gini King, co-minister of the Connecticut Conference's education and youth department, which sponsored the event. A theology of prayer was also discussed.

## OPPOSING VIEW

*Carl H. Speiser of Affton, MO writes:*

I read with disgust the article on page 4 of Oct. KYP concerning the UCC group concerned with justice for lesbians and gay men. While I am not against justice for these people, I do object to the United Church of Christ having within its organization a formal group supporting sodomy and which, furthermore, has the nerve to ask the UCC to not meet in states that have anti-sodomy laws.

I think that allowing these kinds of groups to be formal UCC organizations (at least calling themselves UCC organizations) can account for part of the reason many of our parishioners are looking for some other church affiliation. The general public tends to think that the individual churches support that kind of behavior even though many do not.

### Church Ed Staff: What Materials Do You Want?

UC Board for Homeland Ministries wants to hear from churches about what they are seeking in the way of Christian education materials that the denomination is not presently supplying. The division of education and publication is also interested in local curricula and innovative thinking. Send materials to Ansley Coe Throckmorton, the division's general secretary, at UCBHM, 132 W. 31 St., New York, NY 10001.



# Racial/Ethnic Program Plans Highlight UCBHM Meeting

Racial and ethnic groups held center stage at the annual meeting of UC Board for Homeland Ministries' corporate members Oct. 31-Nov. 2 and at the Nov. 3 meeting of its board of directors, both in Chicago.

The members heard stories of hope and despair from people of various racial and ethnic groups and visited such mission sites as Good News Community Church, a rare UCC storefront church with African-American and Hispanic members. The directors:

- \* Approved "in principle" a project to study and act on American "pluralism." If the Chicago-based "Coalition for Ministries Among Ethnic Communities" gets final approval next spring from UCBHM and two other participants—Chicago's Community Renewal Society and the Illinois Conference—it will, among other things, create covenants among congregations with differing racial and ethnic memberships to accomplish specific goals in their communities.

- \* Resolved that UCBHM should fund scholarships to foster lay and pastoral leadership among Hispanics and develop "suitable Spanish and/or bilingual" publications and educational resources for Hispanic congregations.

## Meeting Discusses Kids at Worship

Children should be full participants in the life of the church . . . including the Sunday worship service, a statement coming out of a UCC conference recommends.

Signed by a number of the 150 people at an Oct. meeting at Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, the statement calls on the church "to celebrate the power of children," "to equip children for discipleship" and "to include children fully in worship."

Instead of "affirming the gifts and worth of children as proclaimed by Jesus Christ," the statement confesses, "we have excluded children from full participation in worship and the Lord's table . . . used children as objects of entertainment . . . failed to hear their stories or make room for the richness of their gifts."

Speakers throughout the meeting, sponsored by area and national UCC bodies as well as Eden, stressed that kids belong at worship as part of the faith community and as bearers of the gifts of love and trust.

The statement also asks churches "to see that all children are loved, cared, and hoped for." It urges defense of children "against injustice and abuse" and programs "to work for adequate food, shelter, education, and health care for all children."

- \* Voted to continue a liaison committee between UCBHM and the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministry.

In a matter of historical significance, the directors merged into one the 10 corporations whose work UCBHM has continued since the founding of the UCC. A special worship service Nov. 1 was devoted to remembering the contributions of the 10 Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed mission boards and societies and of the people associated with them.

## UCC MEMBERS TO LEADERS:

# Communicate With Us More

Denominational leaders need to communicate more frequently with church members, a recent survey among 295 congregations in 37 conferences reveals. Close to 30% of the churches polled, representing 300 clergy and 2,300 laity, raised the communication issue, according to Sheila Kelly, secretary for information services with UC Board for Homeland Ministries.

Of all of the "messages" UCC members want to get before denominational leaders, "this was the most frequently mentioned," Ms. Kelly said. The response comes from a 1985 "Soundings" program to determine the meaning of UCC membership, the relationship between local church and community and the role of the laity. Initiated by UCBHM in 1984, "Soundings" has involved members of every UCC national body in interviews.

Nearly 50% of those surveyed cited freedom to think for themselves and a tolerance for diversity as reasons for joining the UCC. Close to 40% said their community regarded their parish as warm and caring, while 38% said their church was known for its community involvement.

As for the role of the laity, Christian education (37%), visitation (35%) and com-

## WCC Approves \$400,000 In Anti-Racism Grants

The World Council of Churches has approved U.S. \$400,000 for 51 grants this year from the Special Fund of its Program to Combat Racism. Consisting of earmarked donations, the money goes for humanitarian purposes.

The South West Africa People's Organization will get \$110,000 for aid for detained people and for education and the African National Congress \$80,000 to assist refugees.

No UCC national agency gives to the special fund. However, UC Board for World Ministries contributed \$2,500 for administrative costs of the Program to Combat Racism.

## Sample Covenant Lists Justice & Peace Actions

A sample covenant has been recommended by the working group coordinating activities on the UCC's justice and peace commitment.

The covenant asks UCC churches to make justice and peace a priority, as requested by General Synod 15. It also can be used by conferences and associations.

The covenant recommends ways in which justice and peace concerns can be included in worship, Christian education and financial decisions and suggests community and public policy activities around the issues.

Write UCC Office for Church in Society, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016.

munity program service (33%) were most frequently cited as appropriate activities for lay people, but 30% of those polled said training is needed to carry out such work.

The purpose of "Soundings" is to involve church members in helping to plan for the future mission of the denomination, according to Ms. Kelly. The 1986 survey, with almost double the church participants, focuses on the mission role of congregations, associations, conferences and national bodies.

## CRJ Decries Use Of Welfare Hotels

The UCC's Commission for Racial Justice has passed a resolution calling upon New York State and City officials to provide adequate housing for the thousands of residents of welfare hotels there. Stating that the lack of decent, affordable housing has become a national crisis, CRJ urged all states to take appropriate measures to insure protection of basic human rights of the homeless.

At the Oct. commissioners meeting in Chicago, CRJ staff reported on its support for a group protesting the new *Washington Post* Sunday magazine. The group charges that in the premier issue, only two pieces dealt with blacks and those related to drugs and crime.

Another resolution urges the Governor of North Carolina to intervene in the case of Jacqueline Barbee-Bullock, now serving a 15-year prison sentence for alleged first degree arson. CRJ points out that her burned apartment, owned by a police officer, was condemned for housing code violations only one day before the fire.

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*SEND NEWS stories, PHOTOS and OPPOSING VIEWS of 100 words or less to political or social stands taken in a particular article to KYP, Office of Communication, UCC, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016.*



# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DIVESTMENT ACTION: UCC Citibank Account to Be Dropped

Divestment, the proposed women's center and affirmative action dominated discussions at the UCC Executive Council meeting in Stony Point, NY Oct. 25-29.

The council voted unanimously to withdraw all General Synod-related accounts from Citibank, N.A., effective June 30, an annual cash flow of about \$23 million.

The vote noted the EC's regret at the continuing involvement of Citibank in South Africa which made it necessary to take this action and expressed gratitude for a 30-year relationship that included significant loans for support of six black colleges and a bail bond fund of \$350,000 for the Wilmington 10.

Acknowledging the progress the Pension Boards have made toward implementing the GS 15 pronouncement on divestment, the EC voted to request that the PB not establish

alternative South Africa-free pension funds but move with all due speed toward further divestment of its current portfolio.

The portion of the PB portfolio invested in companies doing business in South Africa has decreased from 41% in 1983 to 27.8% in Oct. With the recent reported withdrawal of GM, IBM and Honeywell, that figure is expected to drop to the low 20's.

Favoring the EC action, the Divestment Implementation Committee and PB both said protecting the interests of pension fund members has been a major concern for them.

At this point, 24 of the 39 conferences have adopted divestment policies, and the UC Boards for World and Homeland Ministries are almost fully divested.

Action was postponed till spring on proposals for a new women's structure and a youth/young adult ministries council. Meanwhile, a study was projected on the organization and structure of the UCC as a whole.

On affirmative action, the EC authorized a survey of national bodies on goals, staff composition and prospects for vacancies to be used in shaping a proposal for Mar.

The council voted that the GS 16 offering go to the UCC Archives Fund.

## H&W Consultants Offered by CHHSM

Churches, associations and conferences interested in a health and human services program can now draw upon the resources of the nearly 200 members of the UCC's Council for Health and Human Service Ministries.

Through CHHSM's consultation resources program, experts are available to offer advice on such widely divergent topics as personnel policies, office management, AIDS, work with the mentally-retarded, teenage pregnancy, drug education, genetic engineering, home health care and housing for the elderly. Help is also available to set up a program offering such services.

According to CHHSM's Susan Sanders, fees are moderate, with no charge for telephone inquiries. Write or call CHHSM, 543 College Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603, 717-299-9945 or 800-822-4476 outside PA.

## UCScene

Retired UCC pastor RICHARD RODES of Columbia, MD was part of the 200-person official U.S. delegation to a Sept. peace forum near Riga, Latvia, U.S.S.R. "To witness top-level politicians from both sides debate, then be forced to answer questions from the audience was unique," says Mr. Rodes, adding that informal discussions with Soviet citizens on day-to-day matters such as parenting were especially "heartwarming." The forum, with sessions aired on Soviet TV, was one of 10 cultural exchanges negotiated at the Geneva Summit meeting.

## CORRECTION

In Oct. KYP, a page 1 article on Sunday worship turnouts misstated one figure. The average UCC church with more than 1,000 members usually draws worshipers equal to 30% of its membership, not 34%.

## S. Africa Pen Pals Available for Youth

UC Board for World Ministries is coordinating a pen pal program for youths and young adults in the UCC and United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

Africa secretary Andrea Young says that while UCBWM has received five individual requests for pen pals so far, the program is especially geared toward group exchanges.

"Ideally, an association or church youth group should participate, because the idea for the exchange came from UCCSA's national youth consultation," says Ms. Young. UCCSA's youth department ranges from high school age through 30. The interracial denomination has been a UCC partner for more than 100 years.

Write Ms. Young at UCBWM, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115.



Yvette Moore

Palestinian children at a church in Nazareth dance and sing songs of peace for a UCC human rights fact-finding group. In Oct., the Office for Church in Society/UC Board for World Ministries group visited refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jordan and churches such as this, just blocks from where Gabriel told Mary about the child of peace she would carry.

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